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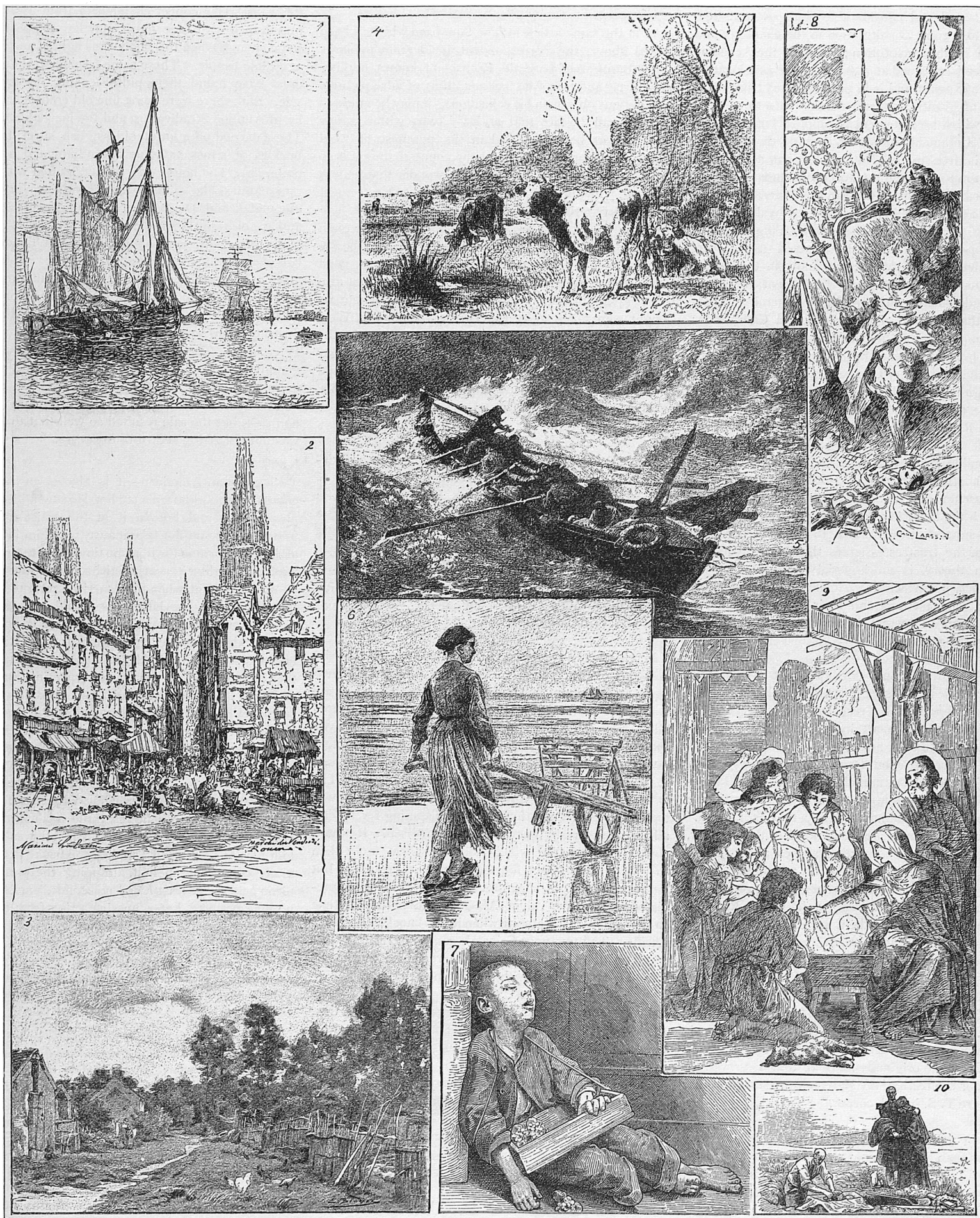
# THE ART AMATEUR MONTHLY JOURNAL

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PICTURES IN THE PARIS SALON OF 1885.

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## My Note Book.

*Leonato.*—Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?

*Don John.*—Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

—*Much Ado About Nothing.*

HERE is much objection to the supercilious bearing of the magnates of the Royal Academy, in the face of the well-grounded complaint, that although a government institution it no longer exercises a guiding influence over the development of true art in England. It is charged that the Academy has neglected to carry out reforms unanimously recommended by the Royal Commission of 1863, in the report of which commission serious defects were stated and considerable changes proposed, amounting to a complete alteration in the character and constitution of that institution; and that the Academy occupies premises valued at £50,000 a year as a location at the public expense, and is in possession, as trustees of the public, of grants, aids, and emoluments to a large amount, of which no statement is supplied for public information. Complaint, moreover, is made that, whereas admission is free to the National Gallery and to the South Kensington Museum (except on students' days), to the British Museum, to the Royal Society, and to the other public and royal institutions, the Royal Academy charges the public for admission to buildings supplied at great expense by the British taxpayer. Sir Robert Peel has given notice that he will move in the House of Commons that, inasmuch as Parliament has dealt with the endowments and privileges, general and particular, of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge; and as an inquiry has been instituted by Parliament into the private funds, the gains, the privileges, and the emoluments of the City Livery Companies, Parliament ought not to forego responsibility in the interests of the public and of true art for the management of an institution such as the Royal Academy. I wish Sir Robert success.

THE London institution, however, seems even more hopelessly controlled by a clique than is our own Metropolitan Museum of Art, and with even less excuse; for although the latter is partly dependent upon the taxpayers for support, it owes much to the generous contributions of the trustees, whereas the Royal Academy, at least in theory, is an imperial institution, as its name implies, to which the Academicians contribute nothing but their pictures and their illiberal judgment, which keep more competent men from rivalling them on the walls of the galleries.

THE well-informed Paris correspondent of The Sun says that "critics and specialists, and, above all, the writers of the reports of the recent Parliamentary inquiry into the state of Parisian art industries, have been endeavoring of late to start a reaction in favor of modern work, and to divert fashion from its disastrous passion for old objects, old furniture, old bibelots. The Parliamentary commissioners attribute the present crisis in Parisian art industries almost entirely to this fashion." M. Soyer, whose enamels are well known in this country, told the commissioners interesting stories about falsifications in his special department of art manufacture; how he is constantly receiving orders for reproductions of old enamels, or for new designs in old styles; and how, although in making them he frankly signs them T. S., they are sent to Amsterdam and Frankfurt, and, after the regulation treatment, come back to the Hôtel Drouot as genuine and dirty old enamels. "One Amsterdam collector," said M. Soyer, "has spent some \$400,000 on enamels. Last year he paid \$600 for a plate by Pierre Raymond, and asked an antiquary to complete his collection, because he had already eleven. It was I who had sold this plate originally for \$30, and I proved to this collector the truth of my statement by showing him my signature T. S. in one corner."

It may be remarked that Robillard, of Paris, imitates even better than Soyer the old enamels of Raymond and Pénaud. Like Soyer, he sells them for what they are, but they sometimes turn up with a false patina, and are sold for old Limoges. The small clocks, with enamelled faces, imported by our jewellers will sometimes be found signed with the name of some celebrated enameller of a past age, like Coteau. They are all modern. Old enamels too much damaged to be worth much money are habitually "fixed up" with water-colors and gum arabic. This process is what is called "l'email à froid."

It is difficult to "restore" an enamel otherwise, but not impossible, as some seem to think. By the use of an electrical battery, heating a few platinum points to white heat, and some powdered colored glass, the work can be done so as to be equal in durability to any. But though the gum arabic enamels can be detected by simply plunging them in water, or, better, in alcohol, the process is so much easier than the galvanic that it is generally used for restorations, whether meant to defraud a buyer or not. But the work has this defect in addition to its solubility, that it becomes yellower with time, and the colors that once matched become in a few years discordant. The crass or dirty appearance of old enamels is given to modern ones generally by the use of gum arabic, but, again, there is a much more deceptive method.

AS in the same article in The Sun from which I have quoted above, the correspondent incidentally remarks that "Baron Alphonse de Rothschild knows nothing about art" and that "he has quantities of false pictures and spurious objects in his collections," it may be interesting to recall the fact that at least twice within a few years he has been swindled in the purchase of "old enamels," although in one case the counterfeiting was so remarkably well done that it was no wonder that he was deceived. In the opinion of experts, the objects must have been covered with enamel paints or powdered, fusible glass mixed with turpentine, and then put through the furnace. This manner of aging can hardly be detected unless by a practical enameller. It was, most likely, in the same way that not only the Baron, but also the English merchant of bric-à-brac from whom he bought were taken in by the Viennese enameller, Werninger, to the extent of not less than a million in the matter of an altar, which had been copied by Werninger while he was restoring the original. Baron de Rothschild got his money back, but the Englishman did not get his. Werninger had made it over to his wife, and got off with five years in prison.

IN reading M. Soyer's plaint that the public are deceived by having his modern enamels "fixed up" and palmed off upon them as old ones, I am reminded of a little fact concerning a deception to which he is himself a victim. At least, I presume that he cannot be aware that enamels from his factory and made by his best artists, although not signed with the deceptive "cachet" T. S.—for M. Soyer does not execute the work himself—are imported into this country, and, being sold at lower prices than he charges, have a good sale.

M. CLARETIE records a pathetic little tragedy he witnessed one day at the Hôtel Drouot. It was that of two good little Chinamen, venders of bric-à-brac, who were being sold out to pay their rent, or perhaps their board-bills. Bronzes, porcelains, boxes of lacquer were given away, not sold. The two owners sat behind the auctioneer, sad, but resigned. At last some object seemed to create a little excitement among the few buyers. The two Chinese stood up automatically to see what it was that these Frenchmen found worth disputing for among all their treasures. They were not surprised. It was a statuette of Lao-tseu which had cost them more than they were likely to get for their entire collection. But perhaps they might hope that it, at least, would be appreciated at its proper value. Alas, they had hardly had time to recognize their statuette when it was knocked down for a trifle. The two poor Orientals could not restrain their tears, and for the rest of the sale remained motionless and as if struck dead with despair in their seats.

PARISIAN actresses seem more fortunate in their sales than other professionals. They sell out at least once during their life-time, and thus they secure a pleasure which must be equal to that of attending one's own funeral. Then the public always expects to see a fine show of diamonds, laces, and articles of personal adornment at an actress's sale. These things are the cheese in the mouse-trap, and easily carry off a lot of generally bad pictures and bric-à-brac. They know, too, at least some of them, how to produce a taking mise-en-scène. At the first sale of Sarah Bernhardt's effects, the catalogue was ornamented with head and tail-pieces in the eighteenth century style and printed at l'Imprimerie de l'Art. All the feuilletonists, critics and paragraphists were engaged to puff the affair and to praise Sarah's undoubtedly honorable motive in making it. Those who were not on friendly terms with the lady, in showing their malice helped her as much as if they had

been. Her diadem of diamonds, emeralds and rubies, in the form of a crown of flowers; her necklaces of brilliants and of pearls, black, gray and white; her bracelets of nine rows of pearls, brilliants, sapphires and rose diamonds; her sixteenth-century crown of silver gilt, enriched with precious stones and enamels, and her silverware brought a total of 178,209 francs. It is true there was no trash at this sale.

SUCH was not the case at the auction of the effects of Marie Heilbron, Comtesse de la Panouse. Her little Renaissance house in the Rue Monceau held a good many things that were worth very little. The Beauvais tapestries, pieced out with borders of blue velvet, could not have looked good for much when taken down from the walls. Old copper chandeliers from Holland, mirrors draped with blue plush, may have appeared handsome enough when the saloon was lighted and filled with agreeable people. These same friends of the cantatrice must have found them pitiful-looking the days of the sale. Still, there were some fine old embroideries, a violin of Antoine Stradivarius, and the inevitable diamonds. These carried off a lot of old English silver, fans, shoe-buckles of strass, yataghans, kandjars, and a Japanese umbrella. The house was, in fact, stuffed with second-rate oddities, like so many houses in New York—Japanese plates and Delft faience; Chippendale cupboards and armoires of Henri II.; modern French fauteuils in pink satin, and iron-wood furniture from Tonquin. The bed-chamber of the countess, we are informed, was all in red—peony red, cardinal red, geranium red, Indian red, blood red, and red of the Legion of Honor; crimson plush on the walls; red velvet on the ceiling. The dressing-room was hung with views of Moscow and St. Petersburg. The grand salon was in Genoa velvet, with gigantic flowers in red, blue and yellow; the dining-room in Spanish leather, equally "sumptuous" and equally inartistic. No doubt all this stuff did not bring in what it had cost, but the sale resulted so well that the countess was not obliged to return to the stage.

ONE day an American—it is always an American—entered Verboeckhoven's studio. He saw a picture which pleased him, and bought it at the artist's price, 1200 francs. He could not take it away with him immediately, and, when he came for it, some time after, the painter had another, just like it, nearly finished. He was putting in an extra lambkin, when the American returned. A happy thought struck the latter: he would take the second picture too, it would form a pendant to the other. But Verboeckhoven wanted 1300 francs for it. His customer hesitated. "Well, well!" said he, "the same price then;" and, dipping a rag in turpentine, he wiped out the lamb! The dealers, it is said, were in the habit of sending Verboeckhoven orders couched in terms like the following: "Wanted, by Monday, three pictures of the usual description—cow with two sheep." He was never known to fail.

A LONDON pawnbroker lately wrote to The Chronicle cautioning those in his trade against a dangerous amalgam. A watch chain of this metal was bought by him for old gold. He "applied the usual tests, and actually cut a link in half, dropping the parts into pure nitric acid for at least a dozen seconds," and discovered nothing wrong. Later, missing a ring from the counter, and being suspicious, he consulted a refiner, who, it appeared, had been duped in the same way.

"As a warning to others," he writes, "I would advise, if any doubt exists as to the nature of the metal they are examining, to well rub it on the black stone, cover the marks with aqua regia, and although the metal will not appear at once to be affected, they will perceive it take a very metallic appearance, and presently to gradually disappear. Thus showing, no doubt, platinum to be the chief adjunct in this mysterious compound, copper and other colorable metals being added to reduce principally its cost, and thus making it soluble, and being soluble makes it open to detection."

SINCE the publication of the above a more serious deception has been brought to light in the case of a material known to the English jewelry trade as "mystery gold." A Mr. Woodland writes to The Jeweller and Metalworker that out of ten sovereigns he tested he found two which were made of "mystery gold" and only plated with the genuine metal. On another occasion, a sovereign submitted to him proved to be spurious, and he took it to the bank, where it was found of the standard weight, and the manager assured him that he would have passed it had it been presented in payment. He



showed the manager the test he had applied, and satisfied him that the coin was counterfeit. At least, so he says. He does not disclose the secret of detecting the fraud, which is disappointing, for it must be a dangerous counterfeit, indeed, that can be "submitted to the action of nitric acid for nearly three hours without being affected," which Mr. Woodland declares is true in the case of a chain of "mystery gold" put into his hands for analysis. One may be sure that the deception is not confined to England. Not only buyers of gold jewelry, but our Mint authorities should look into this matter.

MONTEZUMA.

#### ALPHONSE DE NEUVILLE.

THE distinguished French artist Alphonse Marie Adolphe de Neuville, who died last May after a long and painful illness, was born at Saint Omer (Pas de Calais) in 1836. He left school with brilliant honors at the age of fourteen and, in spite of his parents, who wished to make a lawyer of him, he entered the naval school of Lorient where his natural talent for drawing was developed by the excellent Professor Duhousset. After passing a year at the naval school he was sent by his parents to Paris. Duhousset had told him that he must be a painter, and De Neuville went to see Hippolyte Bellangé to whom he submitted some of his sketches. Bellangé said to him: "You want to be a painter and you come to ask my advice? Here it is: out of a hundred painters who spend their lives before an easel, there are scarcely ten who do not die of starvation, and out of those ten there is not one happy. Believe me, my dear boy, return to your province and give up the idea." Young De Neuville, by no means discouraged, went then and knocked at the door of the painter Yvon and showed him his sketches: "Ah! ah!" replied Yvon majestically. "You want to be a military painter, you'll never succeed." De Neuville next went to Picot who was then very celebrated. Picot admitted him to his studio but set him to drawing in charcoal, which was a polite manner of telling him that he thought nothing of his talent. The young painter comprehended the lesson at the end of fortnight, left Picot's studio and painted, with his own lights, "The Fifth Battalion of Chasseurs at the Gervais Battery (Attack of Malakoff)" which obtained a third class medal at the Salon of 1859. Delacroix remarked the picture, made the acquaintance of the artist, and gave him useful advice. "Remember," said Delacroix, "that the drawing of movement is far more important than the drawing of form," a counsel which De Neuville never forgot.

In 1861 De Neuville obtained a second class medal at the Salon with his "Chasseurs at the Mamelon Vert." His fortune was made; the publishers came to him for illustrations, and, during the next three years he produced numerous fine woodcuts for the "Tour du Monde," Guizot's "History of France Narrated to My Grandchildren," and numerous other publications. In the Salon of 1865 he exhibited an "Outpost"; in 1867 "The Battle of San Lorenzo" and at succeeding Salons, before and after the war, "The Death of General Espinasse," "Troops Passing a River," "Bivouac Before le Bourget," "Les Dernières Cartouches," "Battle on a Railway," "Villersexel," and "An Intrenchment Before Paris"—mostly scenes in that terrible Franco-Prussian War in which he had served as an officer and which he depicted with the precision of a soldier. In former years De Neuville varied his military work with pictures of sea-coast and fishermen and women, but of late years he confined himself entirely to military subjects, and to the souvenirs of the disastrous war of 1870-71. His panorama of the Battle of Champigny executed in company with Detaille is a monument of his patriotism, and all his work both in oil and in water-color, whether exhibited at the Salon or at the exposition of the Société d'Aquarellistes, appealed as strongly to the patriotic as to the artistic sentiment of the public. Indeed, as an artist, De Neuville was never the equal of Detaille, although their names were so often coupled together. The man himself was the image of his painting; always elegantly dressed in the style of a young man of half his years, his black mustache carefully curled, a dark and self-conscious look, a certain eccentricity of hat and of bearing calculated to attract attention, a brief and studied way of talking—such was Alphonse de Neuville. His painting was a kind of very successful woodcut in colors, an illustration full of dash and spirit. In drawing and correctness and truth he never approached Detaille and, while the latter might be called the Mérimée of mili-

tary painting, De Neuville was the Alexandre Dumas, seeking always the movement and noise of the battle and accenting the dramatic and even the melodramatic side.

Nevertheless, De Neuville was a conscientious worker, passing his summers in studying the landscape of the fields of battle which he intended to paint, and in winter working with his models in his studio in the Rue Legendre. This studio was a curious scene. Instead of carpets and precious furniture and objects of art, De Neuville surrounded himself with broken cannon-wheels, bloody mattresses, muddy straw, battle-stained uniforms, casques all battered with bullets, guns and rifles of all kinds, broken swords, and other accessories of real, earnest warfare. The very walls of the studio are full of bullet-marks, the painter having fired at the plaster himself in order to get faithful models for the details of his pictures even in this minute particular.

Of all De Neuville's pictures the most famous, and the most popularized by engravings of all kinds, is "Les Dernières Cartouches." Upon the first of September, 1870, a handful of French soldiers of all arms posted in a house in the suburbs of Sedan are defending themselves desperately against the Prussians. A shell has burst in the house and scattered debris and corpses all around. The bullets have broken the windows, shattered the cupboards, bespattered the walls. Broken chairs and arms are strewn on the floor. A dead soldier is being carried into an alcove, and the survivors are dividing among themselves the contents of his cartridge case. Two or three soldiers protected by mattresses are firing out of the window. One officer is firing a musket like a common soldier; another, wounded, drags himself to the window as if to continue the struggle. Death is on all sides in this room dim with the smoke of battle. A soldier leaning against a cupboard raises with pain his broken wrist; another, wounded in the shoulder, props himself up against a door through which we see in an adjoining room more heroic fighters. There is a veritable fever and fury of carnage in this scene full of the anger and desperation of defeat. But one of the best features of the picture is the figure of the little chasseur who, having used up all his ammunition, is sitting on the edge of a bed where lies a dead comrade. His hands in his pockets, calm, impassible, useless, because he has no arms, the little chasseur is waiting for the enemy and for death to come. He has done his duty; he is furious, but immovable and resolute. Nothing in the picture gives it a stronger note of truth than this little chasseur with his képi slipping over his frowning brow.

#### THE PARIS SALON.

THE Salon of 1885 is not, to employ a French expression, the Salon of the "Barque du Dante;" it has not revealed any new Delacroix or produced any picture destined to mark an epoch in French art. On the other hand it is full of interesting work, and renders an excellent account of the healthy state of art in France.

In the Salon carré, the large room at the head of the staircase, the first picture which demands attention is M. Roll's imposing "Labor—the Works at Suresnes." M. Roll, who is one of the shining lights of the young realistic school, shows us the works at Suresnes in all the feverish activity of toil. The rough ground is covered with carts, horses, blocks of stone, men wheeling barrows, others sawing stone, others hoisting timber, others driving poles, others manipulating the travelling derrick whose elevated rails cross the middle of the immense canvas. There is no studied composition, no artificial concentration of effect; the subject is scattered all over the canvas, and varies in intensity of interest only by the fact that the perspective and the distance necessarily render the foreground more vivid than the middle distance or the background. In the movements and gestures of the men there is no exaggeration, they are really toiling and moiling; they are painted in the blue-gray tonality of reality, and by the very sincerity of the whole scene, and the firm and serious rendering of all these men engaged in common occupations, the whole picture becomes imposing. In the same room is an exquisite portrait of a young lady, by Paul Dubois, who is as great a portrait painter as he is a sculptor. Nothing could be more distinguished and more delicately yet firmly and solidly painted than this young lady with her brown hat, her brown velvet corsage with a bunch of violets in the buttonhole, and a simple ruche of lace round the neck. The painter's brush has caressed the flesh with the greatest fineness of touch but without feeble minute-

ness. M. Dubois's portrait is decidedly the finest in the present Salon, and its calm and serious elegance contrasts strikingly with the theatrical virtuosity of Carolus Duran's portrait of Miss Robins, or of the same artist's vulgar portrait of Mme. Pelouze under a red velvet dais with the image of her château of Chenonceau in the distance. M. Cabanel also has a beautiful portrait of a Californian lady who is the owner of the same maker's somewhat conventional picture of "Jephtha's Daughter" hung hard by. M. Bonnat's portrait of a severe old lady, with curls and a fine new black satin dress, is one of his best and most vivid pieces of work.

The necessities of an official order have obliged M. Bonnat to cope with a subject which is the reverse of living or modern, namely, the "Decapitation of Saint Denis." M. Bonnat's picture is a huge panel destined to form part of the decoration of the Pantheon. Certainly, it is a grand work, simple in composition, powerful in drawing, and vigorously painted by a modern master who worships the great Italians. On the other hand it is not tragic, and it has not the charm of the work of the faithful primitives. M. Bonnat is an amiable Parisian who never believed in the legend of Saint Denis, and who probably never thought about it until he received the order to paint it for the Pantheon. All that we can admire in this work over which the artist has taken immense pains, is his technical skill, and that we cannot admire too highly. M. Bouguereau also exhibits two large religious subjects destined to decorate the church of Saint Vincent De Paul, to wit, the "Adoration of the Magi," and the "Adoration of the Shepherds." The painting is Academic, correct and insipid—a sort of enlargement of an illuminated image in a missal, without expression or interest. M. Bouguereau exhibits, too, a "Byblis Changed into a Spring," an old subject to which he has imparted no other novelty than perfect drawing.

Near by is an immense and sensational picture by Benjamin Constant whose work is highly esteemed by certain American picture-dealers. "The Cherif's Vengeance" represents a richly decorated harem, with a beautifully painted marble floor. Along the whole length of the picture runs a divan covered with rich stuffs embroidered with gold and silver, and surmounted by wall hangings of green velvet adorned with splendid embroidery, forming a Moorish trefoil arch pattern. From behind a curtain on the left, a golden ray of sunset strikes obliquely down the picture and flashes across the floor, which is strewn with the corpses of strangled and poniarded women, lying huddled in disorder among the tumbled cushions. In the centre of the floor is a patch of blood which trickles into the fountain-basin and tinges the water red. To the left are two black slaves, squatting cross-legged, and on the divan sits a warrior, with his cimeter across his knees. The picture is theatrical, striking, and clever, but you do not desire to look at it twice, and all the cleverness and device of the artist do not conceal the want of sincerity and the unreality of his painting. I should apply precisely the same criticism to M. Clairin's colossal picture representing the Moors in Spain, after a victory. This picture means simply nothing; it is a conglomeration of costumes and people in theatrical postures against a rich background of architecture; it is an advertising picture meant to amaze the bourgeois. M. Rochegrosse, who astonished us with his début three years ago, when he exhibited "Vitellius Dragged through the Streets of Rome," and the following year, "Astyanax Flung over the Ramparts," continues to revel in carnage and violence. His picture in the present Salon represents a scene of the Jacquerie (see Michelet's History of France). A mob of infuriated peasants, armed with pikes and scythes and staves, are seen invading a château, and just rushing forward to murder the châtelaine and her children. The mob crowding through the windows is remarkably rendered, and the whole scene is depicted with a dramatic power really wonderful in a young man of twenty-two. M. Bérard's triple panel, "Henri III. at Venice," is a remarkably clever piece of work in the conventional style, but finely composed, and painted with a minuteness of detail of great interest.

Coming now to the examination of pictures of reasonable size and of more general interest, we find Jules Breton represented by "Le Dernier Rayon," which is falling upon an old couple seated at their cottage door, while a child runs forward to meet a young couple returning from harvesting. The artist, who is also a poet, explains the subject of his picture in a pleasing sonnet, and both sonnet and picture are full of urban sentimentality. M. Breton's other picture, "Le Chant de l'Alouette," represents a very plain peasant girl standing,